



Route & Brânch

Issue 7

Issued on time again!

Autumn 2012

Danger for the woodland

The Forestry Commission view is that it is a matter of when rather than if. So, at present, we are on high alert for any signs of the disease in the woodland.



In amongst the larches - how soon before this is a thing of the past?

In a previous newsletter, we warned of the possible dangers of phytophthora ramorum to our woodland. It appears to have spread, with confirmed outbreaks in Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend and what looks like most of the Forest of Dean.

What can you do?

There are some precautions we can all take. We make sure any vehicles using the woodland have clean wheels before they come in. If you have been walking elsewhere, clean your boots before coming to Blaen Brân. The same applies to bike wheels. Please keep to the tracks and clean dogs' paws after visiting woodland. It's not harmful to humans or animals.



Advice from the Forestry Commission regarding phytophthora

Fruits of our labour

Thanks to Stuart Ashley of Cwmbran Community Council, we have now planted a number of fruit trees in the woodland. There are 26 trees, a mixture of apple, damson and pear. The chances of actually picking fruit are extremely low but these trees will attract wildlife.



One of the apple trees planted this year.

Your wood burning stove will love



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Contact Dave Higginson on 07787525875 or email blaenbran@gmail.com for more details.



The name's pond

We haven't had a lot of luck with ponds in the woodland. There's one on the bottom track which doesn't hold water very well. There's one by the top track which is more like a puddle than a pond. There was another by the track going down from the top track to where the middle and bottom track meet. That one disappeared as soon as we dug it as that area is riddled with mine workings.

The only pond which was any good was the one near the stream, just off the top track by the gate by the spring. So we decided that was probably the best place to site one that could be a decent size and might actually last.



The new pond - thanks to this awful summer, we didn't have to fill it.

Once it is grassed over, it will be possible not only to look at the pond and hopefully plenty of wildlife but also continue on a path through to the old beech wood.



BBCW at the Royal Welsh Show

Blaen Brân Community Woodland were fortunate to be invited to share the stand of Llais Y Goedwig, the Welsh Woodlands Association, at this year's Royal Welsh Show.

One group went on the Tuesday to talk about the work of the social enterprise and another group went on the Thursday to demonstrate forest school activities.

The weather was really kind for the show this year with record attendances so the name of Blaen Brân Community Woodland has been spread throughout Wales.

There was also a lot of networking going on with other like minded groups and official organisations. We also had discussions with Llais Y Goedwig over an idea for an event which will hopefully result in a woodcraft skills weekend being held in the woodland next Spring.



One of the many children enjoying making a shelter - you can just see the blue mouse it's being constructed for.

In the background you can see another woodland worker using a traditional lathe.

A clean sweep



Cubs and scouts keeping the drainage channels clean

August saw a party of cubs and scouts doing maintenance work in the woodland as part of their work towards a community badge. They cleared all the litter from the car park - and, as you are probably aware, there is an awful lot of it - as well as clearing all the debris from the drainage channels, which have filled due to the appalling weather this summer.

By some miracle, they actually managed to choose a Saturday when it didn't rain and were able to spend the morning doing a grand job. They then had lunch at the log circle and could enjoy the afternoon playing outdoor games and doing forest school activities.

Flying the flag

In August Blaen Brân Community Woodland was awarded the coveted Green Flag for well managed open spaces for people to enjoy.

There was a mountain of paperwork to be sent off and a site visit from one of their officers. He was mightily impressed with the woodland and said we scored very highly in cleanliness and biodiversity.

Then again, we all know Blaen Brân Community Woodland is a great place.

What's On

Volunteer work

A working party does maintenance in the woods. Contact Dave 07787525875 or email blaenbran@gmail.com for more details. Easier work takes place on Sundays. Technical stuff happens during the week.

Bonfire night

As last year, a chance to see all the displays in Cwmbran - Sunday November 4th 7 pm.

Social event at the Bush

Our ever popular quiz and games night in association with F.O.E. Tickets £3 including food are available from the Bush or David Williams 01633 875704
Thursday 26th October

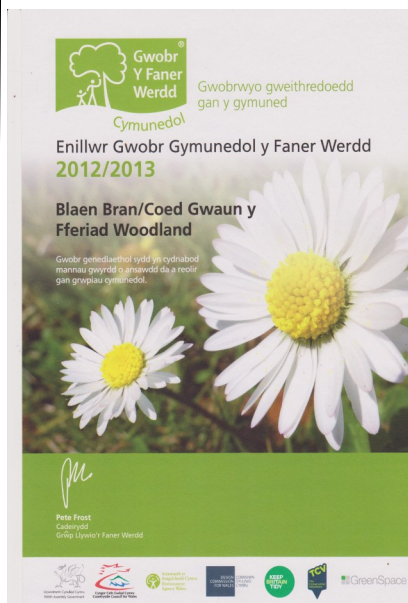
For all details of events

Come visit our website

www.blaenbran.org.uk

Or join us on

facebook



Green Flag certificate awarded to Blaen Brân Community Woodland. We're now on a national database of green spaces.